

SQUIRE JOHN

A TALE OF THE CUBAN WAR

BY ST. GEORGE RATHBONE

CHAPTER X.—Continued.

Jack feels a sudden glow as of exaltation as he remembers that the very party of whom she makes mention is in Havana at this hour. He has cudged his brains to find some method of getting Spencer out of his path—to sweep the road to his wife clear of such an encumbrance—and what could give promise of more success than in playing this girl against him? "Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned," and this applies especially to those women of the south through whose veins the blood leaps and bounds like molten lava, and who know no halfway course between love and hate when once a man has made an impression on their hearts.

Perhaps the situation warrants his action—at any rate, Jack is human, and the temptation to pay Spencer back in his own coin quite irresistible.

So he speaks, and tells this beautiful tigress that the man she once loved—the man who won her heart only to insult her, the man she has remembered only with such bitterness as a Spanish girl can experience toward one who has wronged her—he is in Havana at this hour.

He can readily see she is strongly moved by the circumstance, though she does not reply for some time.

"He does not dream I am under Cuban skies. Perhaps my hour may come. You look at me in displeasure, Senor Jack. I know you cannot understand our ways. But he may yet learn that the girl of Santa Fe and the woman of Havana are one, and have the same grievance."

"Pardon me, but perhaps if the past were opened again it might be disagreeable to you—to others who are jealous of your name."

At this she laughs aloud.

"I see how it is, Senor Jack. You believe I am married—that this is the secret of my appearing in the midst of such luxury; but that is not the case."

"It was a natural supposition on my part, for when I met you before you were not living in such a paradise as this."

She looks a trifle confused.

"I cannot explain to you, senor. A promise stands in the way—a vow to



"Something of importance," the Virgin. But in time perhaps you may know all."

"I shall meet my host at dinner, perhaps," he puts out as a feeler, but is greeted by another silvery laugh.

"You are my guest, senor. There is no other who has a word to say or an order to give under that roof. Therefore feel at ease. Go and come as you will. By the memory of your brave act in the past you are welcome—yes, thrice welcome."

She beams upon him—there is a fascination in her very glance. So Cleopatra of old must have bound Marc Antony under a spell, and caused him to forget his duty to the Triumvirate and Rome.

Jack shakes himself mentally. He decides that it may not be safe to remain under this hospitable roof longer than he can possibly help, since it is not to his liking that he awaken a passion in this tempestuous heart which must turn to Dead Sea fruit.

CHAPTER XI.

Under the Spell of the Enchantress.

Jack makes no attempt to discover the nature of the mystery enveloping Lola. That it may have some connection with the story of Smithers he can readily believe. The present and the future must engage his attention and they give promise of lively enough times to satisfy the most exacting.

Smithers does not turn up, and Jack can well believe the agent is watching the movements of the enemy, so he smothers his impatience, and dines with the little Cuban beauty, waited on by well-trained servants.

The day is slipping away, and Jack's worry increases. He hopes Smithers will bring news when he does come—news that will throw some light on the business in hand.

Lola has endeavored to entertain him with music. She sings Spanish songs to the tinkling of the mandolin, and her voice is a round contralto, very full and sympathetic. Jack has picked up a smattering of Spanish while in Texas and along the border, so that he can understand the major portion of what she sings.

Upon this pretty picture Smithers suddenly bursts without warning.

Travers needs only one look to tell him the agent brings news of some sort, and he springs up hastily to meet him.

Travers feels a little guilty and shows some confusion, but the girl artlessly cries out:

"I have been charmed to find in your friend one whom I knew in Santa Fe as Senor Jack. We have chatted over old times, and seeing he was impatient for your return, I have endeavored to entertain him in my poor way."

"I have no doubt you succeeded," remarks the other drily; and then adds, "With your consent, senorita, I would like to see Mr. Travers alone for a short time."

"Ah, you bring him news; is it not so. I do not know what business has tempted him to visit this poor distracted country just now, but surely I wish it success," she says, quickly.

"Thank you," returns Jack, mentally wondering whether she would be as sincere should she know that the object of his venture is simply the strong hope that he may win the love of his own wife—that and nothing more.

She kisses her hand to them and with merry words, dances away, mandolin in hand. Jack's eyes involuntarily follow the will-o'-the-wisp. Mentally he is thinking that "fine feathers make fine birds;" the last time he saw Lola, she was apparently in poverty, though known even then in Santa Fe as a beauty.

"She is a child of genius; she possesses the form and face of a Hebe and the smile of an angel. Beware, Senor Jack," warns Smithers, half in earnest, though his way of shaking his finger at the young mine owner in a melodramatic manner might be intended in the light of a joke.

"Don't engage in any worry on my account, Smithers, my dear boy. I frankly admit the girl is a beauty,

and has a charm about her, a witchery, that might affect even Jack Travers were he heart-whole and fancy free. But you understand that I am deep in love with my Highland lassie and there is no room in my heart for two—certainly not at the same time. I'm no Turk, Smithers."

"Pardon me, sir; I only joked. As you say, there is a mysterious charm about the presence of Lola. I feel it myself—feel that I should be only too glad to give up all the world and devote myself to her service. But this isn't business"—with a sudden snap of his jaws that indicates a putting away of gentler thoughts.

"Ah, yes, you have discovered something—something of importance, I should judge."

"Well, yes, I rather think I have, sir. It has staggered me quite a lit-



"Ah, yes! I grasp the situation."

"I admit; and there is a promise of some lively work ahead."

Having thus aroused Jack's curiosity, Smithers casts a nervous glance around him—not that he has fears of eavesdroppers in this place, but such an act is second nature to him.

"I have had my suspicions of Senor Roblado for some time, although in doubt as to the exact nature of his character. He has been working under a cloak, in disguise. You remember in New York I spoke of his meeting a number of mysterious men."

"Whom you believed at the time to belong to the Cuban Junta, which has headquarters in that metropolis, where filibustering expeditions are planned and money collected for buying arms, ammunition and dynamite."

Smithers shrugs his shoulders.

"Yes, and dynamite. Well, when I risked the hazard of that guess I was mistaken."

"Then the senor is not a conspirator?"

"I didn't say that—only he was not meeting members of the revolutionist party."

"Still, they were secret agents he met, and his business had to do with Cuba. Ah, yes! I grasp the situation. They were Spaniards."

"Exactly. Roblado is and has been a trusted agent of the Spanish government. I could not exactly say what his mission to London may have signified, but there was something deep behind it; for he is a desperate, daring man, in whom the captain-general places the utmost reliance."

"But now that you understand so much, let me tell my story. I went to the hotel, and loitered about, asking questions where I could without exciting suspicion. The senor was at dinner with the ladies and his friend Col. Spencer; for it seems this gentleman has a title when he reaches Cuban soil."

"While I watched, lo and behold! Roblado appeared. He looked anxious. I was the only person near, and believing, no doubt, I belonged to the hotel, he asked me to send a vehicle to the door without delay."

"I walked away, revolving a little plan in my mind. In a short time a vehicle drove up to the door, and the driver asked for Senor Roblado. That driver was, as you may already have suspected, Senor Jack, no other than myself. I found no difficulty in striking a bargain with the first cabby I

met, and inside his vehicle we exchanged some of our garments. Here, in this strange land of intrigues, nothing surprises people, and the fellow took it as if quite accustomed to such methods.

"Well, out came Roblado, looking spick and span, but with a worried look on his remarkable face, as though he hardly relished the interview he anticipated."

"Judge of my amazement, sir, when he gave his orders to be driven to the palace of the captain general. For the first time a suspicion of his true character flashed over me."

"Details, you know, are not to my liking. We arrived and I left my cab, to usher the senor into the entrance. Lackeys are always about, and messengers come and go; for even now, at the beginning of the rainy season, the general is a busy man. He has sworn to sweep the rebels into the sea, and restore Cuba to Spain, a peaceful province; but already he realizes that the task is more difficult than he anticipated, and is ready to resort to desperate measures in order to succeed."

"Well, sir, I need not explain how it was done—men of my profession have a faculty for accomplishing such things in a manner that appears little short of magical to outsiders; but when Senor Roblado held his confidential talk with the general, I was in a position to hear what was said."

"Senor Roblado is in the secret employ of the Spanish government. Failing to overcome this last rebellion by force of arms, they are now about to resort to strategy, and in this line no people on earth can beat the Spaniards."

"Various schemes are to be put into immediate operation—rewards will be offered for the betrayal of all filibustering expeditions, extraordinary inducements given to those enemies of Spain who will lay down their arms, and last of all it is designed that the leaders of the rebellion, Gomez, Maceo and Garcia shall either be captured or assassinated."

Jack utters a cry of incredulity; and yet why should he doubt the truth of the statement? Such things are in these enlightened days not infrequent. Sometimes it is in Russia or Turkey a leader meets death at the hands of an assassin; again it is in France, while even the freedom of a great republic did not save Lincoln or Garfield.

"From what I could learn, the captain general does not favor this latter method, but is determined to make an attempt at capturing these bold leaders who continue to defy him, and should they fall into the hands of the military authorities, you can easily guess what their fate will be."

"So a clever plan has been arranged and to Roblado and Spencer has been given the task of bringing the great Gomez into Havana."

"Well, I am interested, but so far I see no cause for alarm on my part. Of course, those in sympathy with the rebels might be anxious about the outcome, but it surely does not matter much to you and I, Smithers," remarks Travers; and then, as his keen eye notes a flitting look of embarrassment upon the features of his companion, the thought dawns in his mind that perhaps, after all, Smithers is more deeply interested in the fortunes of the struggling patriots of Cuba than he has ever admitted."

(To be continued.)

Need for Clergymen.

The Kentucky colonel, lunching at the Arena, was telling the story of a famous Kentucky feud which had died a natural death, there being now only one survivor.

"Do they have any clergymen in Kentucky?" asked one of the party.

"Of co'se," replied the colonel. "They mus' have clergymen in Kentucky to read the bu'ial suvvice ovah the daid."—New York Times.

Confirming His Theory.

He—It seems to me you are very capricious. You were more cordial the last time I saw you.

She—Was I? Well, I dare say that was mere caprice.